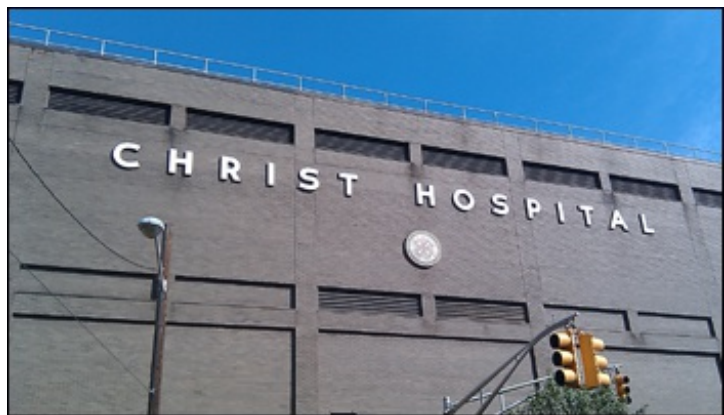


Updated: Christ Hospital Board of Trustees Unanimously Authorizes Filing Chapter 11 Reorganization If Necessary; Calls Into Question Other Bid Proposals

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Following [Prime Healthcare's decision to withdraw a bid](#) for non-profit Christ Hospital, and unconvinced that other bidders are in fact in a position to purchase the struggling hospital, Christ Hospital's Board of Trustees unanimously approved authorizing filing Chapter 11 reorganization "if necessary."

The flexibility of reorganization would "ensure that Christ Hospital continues to serve the community as an acute care facility here in Hudson County," said the group in a statement.



According to board chairman Geoff Curtiss, who is also the rector of All Saints Church in Hoboken, the reorganization has become necessary in part because state aid has dried up and Trenton has refused to advance funding to the hospital. Court proceedings are expected to begin next week, he said, and the process of reorganization will last at least "a couple of months." In addition to allowing the hospital to stay open, it will also give the Board a better idea of which investment group can in fact afford to purchase the health center.

"This will allow us to hear people on the stand" said Curtiss. "[Bidders] will have to testify about the validity of their bids." And just how trustworthy some of the bids for the hospital are remains a concern, explains Curtiss.

In fact, despite a [\\$104 million bid last week from the Jersey City Medical Center and Community Healthcare Associates to purchase the hospital](#), Curtiss says "it's unclear the money is actually there."

The Medical Center, says Curtiss, would only lease the hospital and "has little to do with" the financial side. When Christ Hospital representatives met with Community Healthcare, Curtiss said it was "pretty clear the money wasn't available to do all that they said they would do."

However, William Colgan, Community Healthcare's managing partner, [emphatically denied Curtiss's assessment of their bid](#). Returning a call from *JCI* a day after this article was posted, Colgan says he was "shocked" that the Curtiss would suggest their bid wasn't legitimate or that funds aren't available.

Colgan says CHA contacted Christ Hospital immediately after the deal with Prime had “fallen apart, which was literally a couple days ago. We met with their senior management team and, on the contrary, we substantiated to them that we were prepared to go forward.”

Kelly declined comment on Colgan’s version of the story and Curtiss did not call *JCI* back.

Curtiss added that he’s disappointed in the public resistance of the sale to Prime Healthcare, a move that would have avoided the need for bankruptcy court while maintaining the hospital’s services. The group had already spent close to \$1 million in an effort to purchase the hospital, he added.

But to Reverend Willard Ashley of Abundant Joy Community Church, until yesterday a Board member of Christ Hospital, the community’s concern was well-founded.

“There was a lot of uncertainty in the community as to what would happen if the non-profit hospital closed,” explained Ashley.

Ashley said that while it had been a been “some time” since he had attended a board meeting, when two other board members seperately asked him to partake in a conference call scheduled for Wednesday, February 1st — a conversation that would ultimately lead to an agreement to file for Chapter 11 — he agreed to. However, Curtiss intervned and said there was “concern.”

“It was because of [Ashley’s] lack of attendance on a board with a board attendance requirement,” said Curtiss. Ashley, he went on, would not have been “up to speed” and some on the board felt it was “not appropriate” for people who had not fulfilled the attendance requirement to participate.

But Ashley says he is concerned that he was asked not to participate because of a forum he held at his church. The forum, eh said, demonstrated strong public resistance to the sale to a for-profit hospital, and this may have put him at odds with some on the Board. Curtiss denies this suggestion.

Yet the question on Ashley’s mind is why Christ Hospital’s board referred to him as a board member at the community meeting two weeks prior to yesterday’s phone conversation if they did not think he should be part of the board.

“It was convenient for them two weeks ago, but now it’s not?” he asked of being uninvited from the conference call. “I wasn’t planning on participating until I was asked in two separate emails.”

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